

Remarks/Arguments:

In the prior Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that such claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 7 and intervening claim 5, which have been canceled. Thus, claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 2-4 and 8-13 depend from claim 1 and are thus also in condition for allowance. Claim 8 has been amended to depend from claim 1 rather than claim 7, which has been canceled. Claim 6 has been canceled in view of the amendments to claim 1.

Also in the prior Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that such claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this Amendment, claim 15 has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 14, which has been canceled. Thus, claim 15 is now in condition for allowance. Claims 16 and 17 depend from claim 15 and are thus also in condition for allowance. Claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 15 rather than claim 14, which has been canceled.

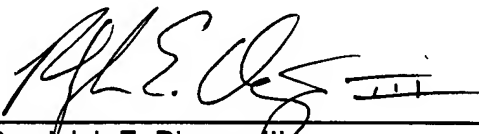
The foregoing amendments to claims 1, 8, 15 and 17, and the cancellation of claims 5-7 and 14, render the prior rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) moot. All claims pending in the application are presently in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance with respect to claims 1-4, 8-13 and 15-17 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

RANKIN, HILL, PORTER & CLARK, L.L.P.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Digges, III", is written over a horizontal line.

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